

## TEACHER TRAINING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UBE SCHEME IN RIVERS STATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS, NIGERIA.

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### Abstract

*The UBE scheme had clear provisions for a dependable primary education and teacher training to underline and guide its implementation. Although it was inaugurated in 1999, the programme could not take off until 2004 when the UBE Act was signed; thus full implementation was experienced in 2005. (FRN, 2005). This followed the appropriation of the UBE fund to the UBE Commission and its subsequent disbursement to the States. Since 2004 therefore, it is expected that UBE teachers should be expressing outstanding qualities, teaching skills and good classroom management and the UBE was predictably to be, by now, a very outstanding education scheme. The programme in the past 17 years have neither received commendation nor has it presented manpower representative enough of its implementation strategies. This paper hence recommends that, the regular training of teachers and monitoring will sustain the implementation of the UBE scheme.*

*Keywords: Teacher Training, Sustainability, Teaching practice.*

### Introduction

The UBE programme implementation was hinged on series of well stipulated constituents. Top on the list was teacher training which was seen as very necessary to oversee the functioning of all other implementation requirements. Teaching training is made up of theory and practice. The training should be for UBE teachers and trainee teachers yet to complete learning programmes in training institutions. The trainee teacher's field of experience is an essential component of learning for which teaching and supervision plays an important role. Zahorik (2021) explains that, during training, the trainee teachers' should be assigned to a school and a supervisor from a tertiary institution to mentor, by bridging the theory and practice in the training process. The duration should be measurable. Routine application of variety of methods while teaching in class is part of teacher preparation and what really happens in this particular area has a lot of bearing on the quality of teachers on training. Pearl & Pearl (2021) hence suggests that this could be resolved by providing better supervision of trainee teachers; however it is a complex process. Epic Digest considers the barriers to improved trainee teachers' supervision and performance. Approaches are identified to overcoming such barriers and describe collaborative efforts in which school and university personnel are equal partners. In Nigeria, supervision of trainee teachers has been incorporated into the teacher training programmes by both the National Commission for colleges of Education (NCCE) and the

National Universities Commission (NUC) as a form of internship or apprenticeship programme. An idea well stipulated in policy. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) declared that the purpose of teacher Education in Nigeria's Educational system should be:

- To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers.
- To encourage further, the spirit of inquiry and creativity in the teacher's.
- To help teachers fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives.
- To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country but in the wider world.
- To enhance teacher's commitment to the teaching profession.

To emphasize further, the National policy on education states that "Teacher Education will continue to be given major emphasis on all our educational planning because no education can rise above the quality of its teachers". The well specified policy intents for teacher training for the implementation of the UBE however lacked followership. Although all forms of professional training have a theoretical and a practical component, the professional and quality education of teachers is not an exception. University of St. Mark and St. John newsletter (2022) states that in Education institutions and the faculties of education trainee prospective teachers are supervised by external moderators in addition to the universities supervisors as required by the National Commission for colleges of Education's guideline and National Universities Commission. UBE teachers therefore should be trained in these institutions of learning intermittently for the attainment of the objectives of UBE. It is against this background that this study is emphasizing teacher training for the implementation of the UBE Scheme in Rivers State Primary Schools.

### **Definition**

#### **Teacher Training**

Teachers training or Teacher Education refers to the policies, procedures, and provisions designed to equip (interested and prospective) teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and in the community.

#### **Sustainability**

It is the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level. Cambridge English Dictionary (2022) defines sustainability as the quality of being able to continue over a period of time.

#### **The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme**

It is a nine (9) years basic education programme, which was launched and executed by the government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance and poverty as well as stimulate and accelerate national development, Political consciousness and maintain education standards from the foundation.

#### **The concept of quality teacher training.**

As initially emphasized, the concept of quality teacher training traditionally has two components; the theoretical aspect and the practicum based teaching practice. The two

components are separately taught and are expected to be complementary. The theory courses are made up of philosophy, sociology, history and intellectual context of what students learn. The ones that have taken a step further than theory are psychology, curriculum studies and educational technology. They are accompanied by immediate practical application to teaching (Claxton 2020). Despite the fact that recently, there has been a development of micro-teaching, clinical supervision and early field experience (EFE) which has added variations to teacher education/teacher training programmes, the training process still requires stringent followership to ensure that teachers are well trained. Mondal (2022) opines that these principles are not ends in themselves but means to educational practices for the ultimate goal of pupils' learning. The remaining part of teacher training are the teaching subjects like English, Home Economics, Chemistry etc) which makes up Sciences, Arts, Social Sciences and Vocational Studies. These are courses that of necessity, teachers must express skills for certification of their teaching abilities.

Most trainee teachers easily pass foundational courses and the teaching subjects are done through teaching practice and method classes. At first, it was by verbal transmission of teaching practice tips before the arrival of micro teaching. Orchard & Winch (2015) stated that the professional training of teachers stands for a partnership between a body of theoretical knowledge and practical skills which are needed for achieving competence in a particular profession. So, to the source, training teachers involves assisting them to acquire knowledge, skills and attitude that would enable them function as expected in the teaching profession. Gettinger, et al. (2020), opines that method classes, seminars and workshops on use of instructional materials, play prominent roles in the quality of training teachers. It is where they are helped to demonstrate application of theoretical principles of teaching as well as gain insight into the complexities of teaching, the challenges and problems they may encounter in schools. Ruchika (2020) regards supervision as involving various activities which are directly concerned with studying and improving all conditions surrounding teaching and learning and bring about growth of teachers and pupils.

Imig & Imig (2021) supports this view that quality in teacher education is hugely dependent on supervision and administration. The source sees supervision as a phase of administration in which supervision is concerned more with the appropriateness of instructional expectations. Supervision is also reported as a phase of administration which has particular relevance for expectations (product of educational systems). In addition, mentoring and monitoring plays major roles to ensure that rudiments of the training process are judiciously adhered to.

### **Teacher training by mentoring for UBE implementation**

Ezekiel-Hart (2003) thus conducted a study to prove that mentoring is a quality assurance strategy in the Primary schools. The study sampled five primary education schools in Obio/Akpo LGAs in Rivers State in clusters. Six classes were selected from each of the schools which summed up to 30 class teachers in the cluster. With an inclusion of the five school heads a total figure of 35 teachers were finally sampled for the study. The classes selected from each of the schools include primaries 1a, b, 2a, b, 3a, and b. The qualifications of teachers and head teachers observed include 28 NCE holders and 7 university degree holders. These, were observed in the teaching of English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Primary Science.

The findings revealed that teachers acquired certified trainings to retain their jobs. The mentors noticed an offensive rate of truancy among female teachers in the States who dedicated most of their official hours to trading. The study also revealed gross expression of incompetence in teaching and poor application of instructional materials by primary school teachers which is too unhealthy for the UBE scheme.

The period of observation lasted for a whole term and each teacher was observed three times a week while teaching and interacting with pupils'. The mentors however encouraged the mentees to improvise materials and take time out to study how effectively methods could be applied in class as this is the basic way their training could be reflected. The study also revealed that well trained teachers express control and confidence in teaching better than those with the minimum qualification. Teachers' self-concept, morale and general attitude influences the quality of output and the implementation of the UBE scheme irrespective of their qualifications.

The study therefore informs that if teachers' quality training is assured, the UBE scheme would equally be insured. Quality orientation and training are what the teacher requires to make gainful contribution to the primary school learning environment which is the foundation of the educational sector. The primary school teacher is the potter who moulds in individuals' human characteristics in a formal foundational environment. This teacher must of necessity acquire quality training to accomplish his unique expectations. Care must be taken to acknowledge the act of teaching in the primary school as outstandingly different from the general teaching profession at other levels. This is so because, the child is the target of primary education for which the UBE is planned for a successful implementation. The objectives of the implementation of the UBE cannot easily be attained without well trained manpower. (FRN, 2008).

In all these definitions there are common elements which show development and improvement of the teaching/learning situation in the school system and these are concerned with the ways and means of making teachers work effectively and pupils learn so that the school system can achieve the goals for which it is set up. Wikipedia (2019) describes teaching practice and training as including all the experiences which a teacher is preparing for active work with pupils encounters during assignment in school. It includes many activities like writing lesson notes, filing, correcting papers and delivering instruction. The trainee teacher is exposed to all the practices of a regular teacher during the teaching practice and training period as he does everything a teacher does to ensure effective teaching. University of St. Mark and St. John (2022) look at teaching practice as a way to help trainee teachers by:

- Exposing them to the classroom and school situation, the knowledge of which will enable the trainee teacher on graduation to be fully aware of what he/she is going to meet in schools.
- Enabling them to put into practice psychological and sociological principles they have learnt to maintain proper classroom atmosphere suitable for teaching and learning.
- Enabling them to come into contact with young persons, the type they would teach on graduation, so that this period becomes one rehearsed for handling young people.

All these are therefore aimed at producing professionally competent, efficient and effective teachers for the school system. Adequate and quality teachers in Rivers State Primary schools are what the UBE needs for effective implementation. According to Echebe, (2019) teachers

need to be continuously updated in knowledge and skills in view of a large volume of knowledge being generated as a result of technological advancement, which in turn calls for new ways (skills) of handling classroom teaching and learning interaction

### **Standards for UBE implementation**

FRN (2014) outlines five goals of Teacher Education. In supporting these goals, the government demands that 'All teachers in educational institutions shall be professionally trained. Since teaching is a legally recognized profession in Nigeria; in this regard, Government has set up the Teachers Registration Council to control and regulate the practice of the profession.' (p 39-40, No 72&78). This was decided as to maintain quality and specify on selection of qualified and experienced manpower in the teaching career for the UBE scheme.

Ryan, K. (2010). interestingly observes though, that primary school teachers are beginning to attain first, masters and doctoral degrees in education progressively all over the country but, the question stands; do they retain teaching in the primary school? Besides the research reports the number of primary school teachers with masters and doctoral degrees as either ten or twenty in a whole State which by statistical measurement is not significant for effective UBE scheme implementation when compared to high enrolment each session. On this account, Osokoya, I. (2010).

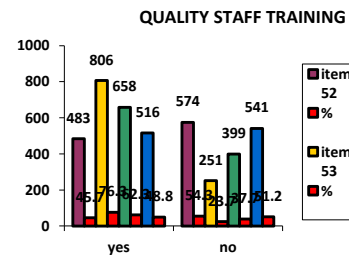
expressed disappointment that 40% of the State primary school teachers practicing in the federation have the NCE, 60% are still not qualified to teach in the primary school while the qualified few are serving elsewhere with better pay not in the primary school. To justify these claims and findings, a research question was asked to guide this study.

### **Research question: To what degree has quality teacher training been adequate for the implementation of the UBE scheme in Rivers State primary schools?**

To analyse this research, question a simple percentage was used. Findings were presented on table. The table showed percentage of respondents' responses on the adequacy of quality teacher training in Rivers State primary schools. Results of findings were shown in histogram.

**Table** shows percentages of respondents’ responses on adequacy of quality teacher training for the implementation of UBE in Rivers State primary schools

S/n	Items	Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
52	I have participated in three workshops and seminars sponsored by UBE.	483	45.7	574	54.3	1,507	100
53	I learnt something new to improve my teaching skills.	806	76.3	251	23.7	1,507	100
54	I have not benefited from retraining programmes for teachers in my school.	658	62.3	399	37.7	1,507	100
55	Training of teachers in my school is not encouraged by the UBE programme.	516	48.8	541	51.2	1,507	100



**Figure 1:** Histogram showing percentages of respondents’ responses on the adequacy of quality teacher training values for UBE implementation. (Table and figure adopted from Evaluation of UBE scheme in Rivers State. Faculty of Education Ph.D thesis university of Calabar)

The result in the Table indicates that 483 representing 45.7% of the total respondents agreed that they had participated in three workshops and seminars sponsored by UBE; while 574 (54.3%) disagreed. Also 806 (76.3%) agreed that they learned something new to improve their teaching skills; while 251(23.7%) disagreed. 658 (62.3%) also agreed that they had not benefited from retraining programmes for teachers in their schools; while 399 (37.7%) disagreed. Finally, 516 (48.8%) agreed that training of teachers in their school was not encouraged by the UBE programme; while 541 (51.2%) disagreed.

The result of the analysis showed that the percentage for disagreement for item 52 and 55 was higher than 50. This implied that quality teacher training had not been achieved for the implementation of the UBE scheme in Rivers state in terms of participation in workshop/seminar and retraining programmes for teachers. The result also showed that the percentage for agreement for item 53 and 54 was higher than 50. This implied that the quality of teacher training has been achieved in terms of learning something new though teachers had not benefited from retraining programmes for the implementation of the UBE programme.

**Recommendations**

1. Teacher training should be re-emphasized irrespective of its level of adequacy, by organising workshops, seminars and conferences as these would keep the teachers informed and equipped with the necessary skills for the use of modern technology.
2. Bosanquet, Radford & Webster (2021) recommends therefore that quality training for primary school teachers must not only be based on acquiring a degree but focus on

learning skills acquired from regular workshops and seminars. The UBE objectives create room for manpower development. There is however a desire for quality training particularly for primary school teachers. Primary school teachers could acquire training to boost their qualifications from Colleges of Education, National Teachers Institutes and universities. For well emphasized training it is necessary that teacher training colleges should be re-established for professionalism in the teaching career.

3. The training of primary school teachers should vastly be concentrated on the curriculum. Primary school teachers' area of specialty should be well defined, mastered and given an accomplishing intent. The child in society interacts with all sorts of environment. This awareness must be reflected in the teacher training curriculum. Osokoya, I. (2010). revealed that "the traditional teacher education programme in Nigeria is obsolete. The government should change the system to reflect and meet the realities of modern teacher training institutions, where modern instructional technologies are utilized; if we expect our teachers to properly train our youth..."
4. Obanya (2000) emphasizes that, Children must benefit from UBE and federal government. The primary school teacher must therefore acquire quality training to accomplish this. A teacher can only teach what he/she knows. Some people tend to blame the teacher for the falling standard of education in the country. But critics missed to understand that teachers can become better teachers only when they are well trained and motivated. No educational system can rise above the level of its teachers and no society can reap where it did not sow' (P15).
5. The Nigerian society accepts the philosophy of Rousseau as stated in Butts (1963) that education is capable of setting man free but everywhere man is in search of good teachers due to lack of well-trained quality teachers. Fafunwa, A. B. (1991) however confirms that teachers are judges. The philosopher states that a judge can only judge correctly those things he knows about; in which he could only be a good judge. In every subject only a man educated in that area could judge correctly and that man of good general education is the good judge in general. Only individuals trained to teach in the primary school could teach the child effectively. The primary school teacher could be trained to be a good general judge as primary education exposes the individual to versatile skill acquisition.
6. Akpan (2002) however revealed that, primary school teachers who are students of NCE and degree programmes lack good coverage of the curriculum in their teaching subjects due to the time duration of the programme because about 95% of the teaching staff are in the sandwich programmes. This by implication means that the training programme is not adequate to guarantee effective teaching for the implementation of the UBE programme to be realised. For effective implementation of the UBE, teachers should aspire to go all the way through the ladder of education and particularly enroll in programmes in which the training process meets up proper coverage.
7. Teachers in training also could be assigned to schools to practice for a longer period. Six weeks teaching practice as it is done in most universities of education is not enough. Atleast, a whole session under supervision is a better recommendation.

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